AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A surgical instrument for treating female urinary incontinence, the instrument comprising:

a) a handle;

b) a shaft extending in a distal direction from the handle and comprising a curved portion, the shaft being adapted to access interior tissue within a human body;

c) a blunt tip including a solid apex disposed at a distal end of the shaft for blunt dissection of tissue; and

d) a window including an L-shaped slot located within a distal end portion of the shaft, the L-shaped slot including a first leg extending radially inward and a second leg extending axially in a distal direction from an inner end of the first leg.

2. (original) The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the shaft is adapted to transvaginally access interior tissue within a female human body.

3. (cancelled)

4. (previously presented) The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the window is capable of receiving and retaining a suture or sling.

5. (cancelled)

6. (original) The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the handle comprises a friction based gripping surface.

7. (previously presented) A device for deploying an implant within a human body, the device comprising:

a body member including

(a) a connector adapted to attach onto an instrument;

(b) a retainer coupled to the connector for holding the implant;

(c) a shield located adjacent to and spaced apart from the retainer and at a distal end of the device for shielding the implant from surrounding tissue during insertion of the device into a human body; and

(d) a pair of proximal tabs located adjacent to and spaced apart from the shield, the pair of proximal tabs being adapted to bend inward to drive the shield outward so as to expose the implant from the shield and disengage the implant from the device, thereby allowing the implant to engage into surrounding tissue.

8. (previously presented) The device of claim 7, wherein the implant is a surgical hook having a suture attached thereto, and the shield protects a tip of the surgical hook during insertion of the surgical hook into the human body.

9. (original) The device of claim 7, wherein the retainer holds the implant to the body member by a friction fit.

10. (cancelled)

11. (previously presented) The surgical instrument of claim 1 comprising an element for covering the window.

12. (previously presented) The surgical instrument of claim 11 comprising an actuator for operating the element, the element being movable between an open position, an intermediate position, and a closed position.

13. (previously presented) The surgical instrument of claim 12, wherein

the window is adapted to receive a suture or sling when the element is placed in the open position,

the window is adapted to retain a suture or sling when the element is placed in the intermediate position, and

the window is adapted to release a suture or sling when the element is placed in the closed position.

14. (previously presented) The surgical instrument of claim 12, wherein the actuator comprises a knob located on the handle.

15. (previously presented) The surgical instrument of claim 12, wherein the element comprises a cutting edge.

16. (previously presented) The surgical instrument of claim 15, wherein

the window is adapted to receive a suture or sling when the element is placed in the open position,

the window is adapted to retain a suture or sling when the element is placed in the intermediate position, and

the cutting edge is adapted to cut a suture or sling when the element is placed in the closed position.

17. (previously presented) The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the shaft is adapted for percutaneous access through an incision in the abdominal wall.

18. (previously presented) The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the shaft is adapted to place an implant introduced through a vaginal incision.

19. (previously presented) The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the first leg and the second leg form an angle of about 90 degrees.

20. (new) The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the blunt tip is conical in shape.